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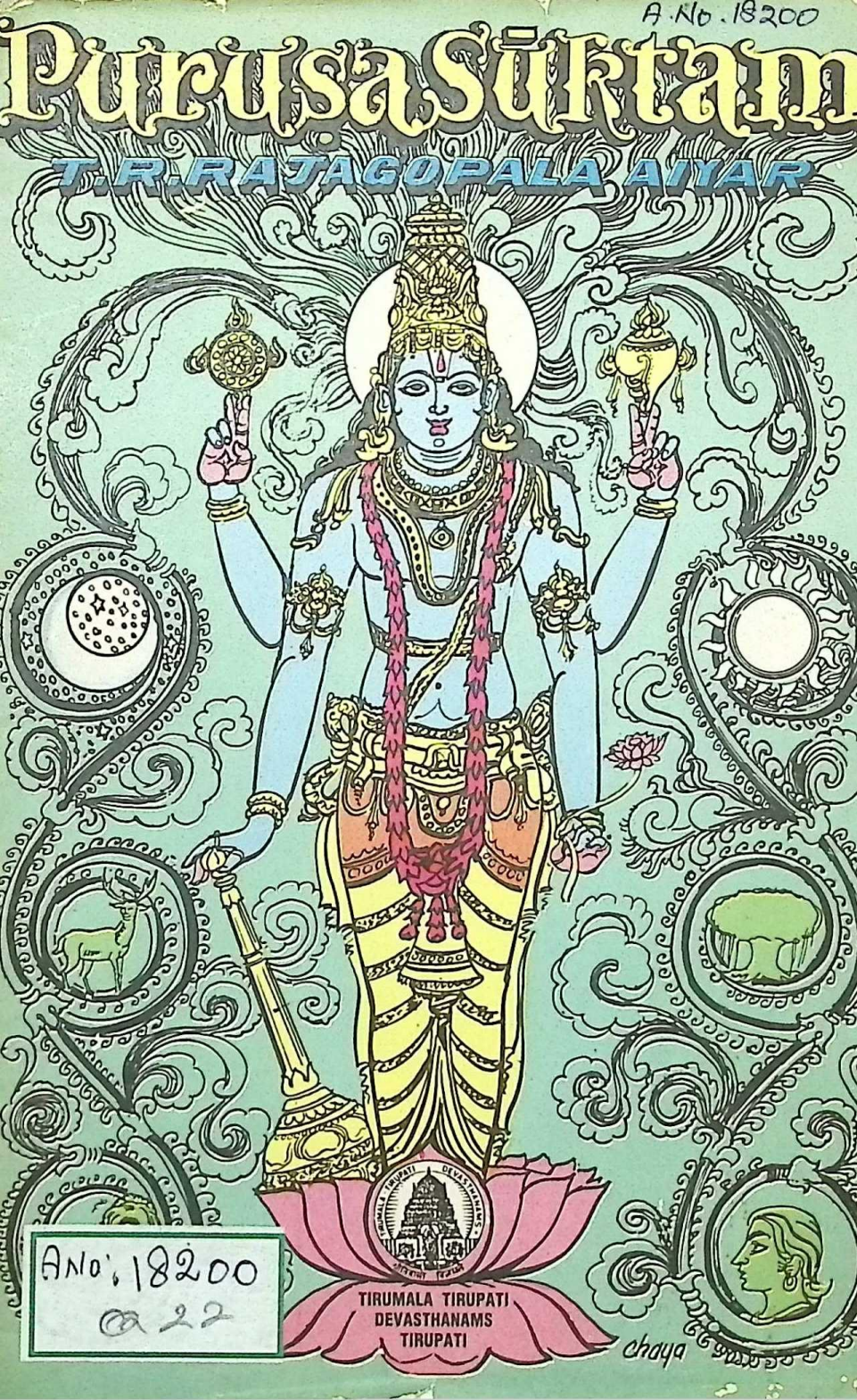
Puruṣa Sūktam

T. R. RAJAGOPALA AIYAR



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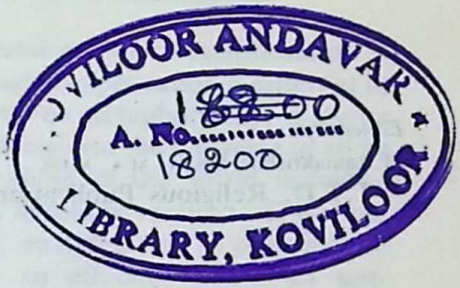
PURUṢASŪKTAM

With Translation and Notes



By
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PURUṢASŪKTAM
by T. R. Rajagopala Aiyar

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PREFACE

OM Hinduism is rich in Vedic literature which represents the recorded experiences of the sages, of the Universe here and beyond. The Indian seer has traced all Existence to a single supreme source, calling it Puruṣa, the Cosmic Being.

The Hindu view regarding creation and its manifestation is embodied in the *Puruṣasūkta*. Though its application is different in its ritual context, taken allegorically or metaphorically, it shows the transformation of the Cosmic Being into the Universe in all its variety, thus implying that 'everything in the world including ourselves is Divine and the divinity should be realised.' This is the main teaching of the *Puruṣasūkta*, enabling one to contemplate and practise Puruṣa-upāsanā, as an effective means of self-realisation.

The popularity of *Puruṣasūkta* is also understood, in its application in the daily worship of one's chosen deity, in way of Ṣoḍaśa-upacāras (sixteen services offered in the worship of the deity) by using each one of the 16 ṛks for each upacāra.

Sri Rajagopala Aiyar has successfully and clearly driven home these facts by his elucidation in his translation and notes.

As it is well known, the Tirumala—Tirupati Devasthanams are making sincere and serious efforts to convey the message of our scriptures to the literate common reader and bring him face to face with the supreme reality and remind the common man about the rich spiritual heritage he is heir to. We hope this will go a long way to help people realise the true goal of their lives, normally engrossed in the routine humdrum of life.

We are happy to issue this small book, *Puruṣasūkta*, as the very first publication, through our latest Photo-typesetting process to meet the ever increasing demand for works on Hindu religious literature and hope it will be received well by the public. OM

19-4-1982,
Tirupati.

P. V. R. K. Prasad, I.A.S.,
Executive Officer,
T.T.Devasthanams.

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Introduction to Puruṣasūktam

The Sūktams

The Vedas contain certain portions which have been designated as Sūktams or good utterances, hymns in praise of the gods and others. There are about one hundred of them in favour of Agni, Śrī, Durgā and other gods, and two out of the usual run in favour of Annam or Food Rks Mandūka or the frog, but easily the most important and popular of them is the Puruṣasūktam, of which there are two rescensions, one in the Rk Samhitā in the tenth Maṇḍala ninety, and in the Yajur Veda, the Pūrva Anuvāka occurs in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, third Adhyaya 12th Anuvāka, and Uttara Anuvāka as the thirteenth. Since the Yajur version is fuller and in greater use, I have taken it up for translation.

Uses

The Puruṣasūktam is put to various uses. It comes in at a portion relating to Karmas or rites. In a sacrifice, the figure of a Puruṣa or man is arranged with bricks on the eastern side, and the Pūrva Anuvāka is used for invoking and casting the votive offering in the Mahāgni. The Uttara Anuvāka is used in the Puruṣamedha sacrifice where Āditya is invoked through it, according to the directions given by sage Āpastamba in his Sūtras. But in the gradual evolution of India, the age of sacrifices passed away, but the value of the *Puruṣasūktam* was recognized and it was inducted into worship. There are ṣoḍaśa upacāras, sixteen steps in worship, and an authority prescribed that the sixteen Ṛks of the Pūrva Anuvāka should be used in worship at the rate of one ṛk per upacāra. This is now extensively practised. But a still higher use to which it has been fittingly applied, as in the case of the Rudram, is for the purpose of the Puruṣa upāsanā, the spiritual contemplation and attainment of God. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, it is described that the earth got over-burdened by the alarming birth and growth of Asuric (Demoniac) men. It approached Brahmā for relief, who

in turn went to the Milky Ocean, along with the gods. "And having gone there, with mind controlled, Brahmā invoked the Lord of the world, the god of gods, who showers all the gifts that men desire, the Puruṣa through the *Puruṣasūktam* (10-1-17 to 22). Viṣṇu responded, appeared before them, and assured them that he would take an avatār as Kṛṣṇa and rid the earth of its evil burden.

Foreign Critics

A hymn so striking and different from the rest of the usual run in the Rg Veda is bound to and has attracted the attention of all students of that sakha. It has found a place in the *Vedic Reader* by A.A.Macdonnell pp. 195-203. In his prefatory note, he states:— "There are six or seven hymns dealing with the creation of the world as produced from some original material. In the following one, the well-known *Puruṣasūktam* or hymn of man, the gods are the agents of creation while the material out of which the world is made is the body of a primeval giant named Puruṣa. Both its language and matter indicate that it is one of the very latest hymns of the Rg Veda. It not only presupposes a knowledge of the 3 oldest Vedas to which it refers by name, but also, for the first and the only time in the Ṛg Veda mentions the four castes. The religious view is moreover different from that of old hymns, for it is pantheistic: "Puruṣa is all the world, what has been and shall be." It is in fact the starting point of the pantheistic philosophy of India (p.195)."

The extract betrays confusion in some places, 1. Firstly, it is not the hymn of man, but of Puruṣa, the God in man. 2. The body cut is not that of any of primeval giant but of the cosmic Virāṭ Puruṣa. 3. The deduction that the hymn should have been one of the latest also is not valid. There were two parallel sets of thought. While one preoccupied itself with hymns and rites in propitiation of the several Vedic gods representing the forces of nature, the other went still further back and engaged itself with eschatology. The result of such speculation had to be clothed in language appropriate to it which could not be the mere laudatory one praising the gods. It is also wrong to state that the 3 Vedas are referred to by name. What is referred to as the ṛk, yajus and sāma are the peculiar castings of the hymns at a time when the Vedas had not been classified and grouped. Similarly, the caste system in

India is not referred to. The hymn deals with cosmic creation and it is absurd to limit it to India. The four universal kinds of occupations which prevail and must prevail for all time, not only in this world but in all the worlds are meant. 1. Brahmins are those inclined to spiritual and intellectual pursuits. 2. Kṣatriyas are those engaged in governing countries and large bodies of men and in military activities. 3. Vaiśyas are persons engaged in agriculture and commerce. 4. Śūdras are those engaged in menial services. A verse in the Mahābhārata applies this even to the gods, "Among the gods, the Ādityas are the Kṣatriyas, the Maruts are the Vaiśyas, the Aśvins are deemed to be śūdras, the Aṅgirasas are the Brahmins; thus the fourfold caste distinction among the gods has been described." (Śānti Parva adhyāya 192.) But the statement of Macdonnell that this Sūktam is the starting point of pantheism and later Vedantic thought is correct. But one caution must be made. Unfortunately, in the west Pantheism has come to be technically limited to a wholesale and utter pariṇāma of God into the world, with nothing of the original substance left over. Hindu Pantheism is not of that kind. At no time has it equated God with the Universe. On the other hand, it has been at pains to disassociate Him from it, as in the opening ṛks of this Sūktam.

Another wild theory advanced by one or two foreign critics was that human sacrifice was prevalent in India at one time, and the *Puruṣasūktam* reflects it. Much of the prejudiced view about India was the hang over of the political subjugation of the country by the British, and the assumption "Can any good come out of India?". While religion in Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Mexico and the Mayas in South America sanctioned this barbaric custom, Indian religion and sentiment never even thought of it. The *Puruṣasūktam* expressly mentions that the sacrifice referred to therein is a kalpana, purely imaginary.

The Puruṣa

Who is the Puruṣa dealt with in the *Puruṣasūktam*? The word is one, full of significance and redolent of associations in Indian religious literature. The great Sāṅkhya Darśana divides the world into two categories. Puruṣas or intelligent beings, and Prakṛti or energy and matter. Canto 15 in the Bhagavad Gītā is the Puruṣottama adhyāya. The word is Nāma 14 in the Viṣṇu

Sahasranāma and Saṅkara's comment on it is as follows: "Puram is the body and He who lies or resides in it is the Puruṣa. The Mahābhārata states: "The body is the holy city furnished with nine gateways. The great Self lies permeating it, and hence He is styled as the Puruṣa. The Śruti says: "I existed before all things, that is, the Puruṣatva of the Puruṣa." Other meanings are that He squats among the great, or he dispenses the fruits of action, or He destroys all the worlds at the time of Pralaya, or He is full and perfect and occupies everything. The fifth Veda which is the Mahābhārata states: "Pūrṇāt since He is full, Sadanāt— He sits in or occupies everything, He is the Puruṣa." The Puruṣa is fully described in the Kaṭha Upanishad:

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्थाः अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिः बुद्धेरात्मा महान्परः ॥ (१-३-१०)

महतः परमव्यक्तम् अव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः ।
पुरुषान्न परं किंचित् सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः ॥ (१-३-११)

Meaning: Objects are superior to the senses. Above and superior to the senses is the mind. Above the mind stands the intellect. Above the intellect is the Mahat Tattva or Hiraṇyagarbha, the Creator. Above the Mahat is the Avyaktam, the indefinable origin of the universe. Above the Avyaktam stands the Puruṣa. Higher than the Puruṣa there is none. He is the acme, the supreme goal of all."

Śaṅkara's commentary is as follows: "Now these verses set forth the goal and destination to be attained by all men, the Viṣṇu padam, the seat of God. It starts from the gross senses and goes up in an ascending order to something higher and more subtle than itself, and nearer and more intimate to one's own inmost self. Higher than Avyaktam or Māyā and subtler is the Puruṣa, for He is the cause of all causes, and is one's inmost self, the core of being. Hence He is the Puruṣa, one who is full Himself and fills or pervades everything. Is there anything higher than Puruṣa? The Śruti categorically repels any such lingering doubt by affirming that there is none higher than the Puruṣa, He is the *ne plus ultra.* Since Puruṣa is knowledge *in esse,* and none more supreme exists, He is the utmost end and limit of all subtlety, greatness, and internal selfhood. Hence also He is the supreme goal of all travellers, men who wander above distractedly in all directions in the wastes and deserts of samsāra. The Gītā also states: "Attaining God, man returneth not to samsāra again."

Puruṣasūktam in Ṛg and Yajur Vedas

Remarkable as the appearance of the *Puruṣasūktam* is in the body of the Ṛg Veda, its later incorporation and appearance with additions in the later Yajur Veda is no less noteworthy, for it records an entire shift and development in Indian thought. The main features of the Ṛg Veda text are the following:

1. It consisted of 16 ṛks. 2. Its arrangement was a bit careless and slovenly. 3. Its final 16th ṛk contained the Phalaśruti for Virāṭ upāsanā only. The name of the Rishi who 'saw' the original Ṛg Veda *Puruṣasūktam* is not known. The name of the Rishi who fixed the Yajur Veda text was Nārāyaṇa. He was also the author of the well-known Nārāyaṇopanishad. Since it would be inappropriate for the Ṛg and Yajur Vedas to have two Rishis for one and the same *Puruṣasūktam*, Nārāyaṇa was adopted as the Ṛishi for the earlier Ṛg text also. Rishi Nārāyaṇa effected these changes in the Yajur text:

(a) Ṛk 15 of the Ṛg Veda is entirely out of place where it stands. He shifted it to its present logical position as the seventh in the Yajur Veda.

(b) He developed the further Virāṭ Puruṣa upāsanā which was implicit in the sūktam. The latter half of the 16th Ṛg text was the Phalaśruti. Sāyaṇa, the Vedic commentator states: "They, the high souled upāsakas of the Virāṭ attained unto that heaven which consists in a man becoming like the Virāṭ which heaven is occupied by the earlier Sādhya Devas who practised the upāsanā." There was no provision in it for Mokṣa or final release. In the Kaṭha Upanishad it is the knowledge of this Virāṭ upāsanā that Naciketas demands of Yama by his second boon and the latter teaches. But though it is the height of human longing and desire, it too has to come to an end. It is not an Abhaya Sthānam a place of absolute fearlessness. Naciketas has to and does ask for a third boon.

Rishi Nārāyaṇa moving with the times, traversed from the lower Virāṭ upāsanā to that of the Virāṭ Puruṣa upāsanā. He proclaimed the result of his own self-realization in glowing terms. "Him even do I know, this great Puruṣa with the sheen of the sun, who standeth beyond darkness and ignorance. That intelligent Being, giving name and form to all things, standeth holding commerce with the world in this fashion (Yajur Ṛk 16).

(c) Thus Nārāyaṇa made explicit also that creation is nothing but the appearance of name and form, bringing the sūktams into line with Upanishadic thought.

(d) In Ṛk 17 he furnished the genealogy of the teachers of this Brahmavidyā.

(e) Rishi Nārāyaṇa also affirmed in Ṛk 17 that one becomes immortal not by becoming a god, but only by realizing the Puruṣa within. Sāyaṇa brings out the difference between both the upāsanās by stating that *यथोक्तविराट्पुरुषध्यानं अत्र प्रतिपाद्यते*— "What is enjoined herein is the contemplation of the Virāṭ Puruṣa (and not the mere Virāṭ)."

(f) Nārāyaṇa Rishi shifted Ṛg Veda 16 to its place as Rk 18 of the Yajur. But Ṛk 18, the logical Phalaśruti of Virāṭ upāsanā was not that of Virāṭ Puruṣa upāsanā. Hence Rishi Nārāyaṇa who was also the mantra draṣṭā of the splendid Nārāyaṇa Upanishad (which has almost become the sequel to the *Puruṣasūktam*) added an Uttara anuvāka of six mantras gathering up the loose ends of the Pūrva anuvāka. He reiterated the view of immortality running through the Upanishads; he dethroned the gods whose position Ṛk 16 of the Rg Veda had held up as enviable; he identified Puruṣa with Brahman; he declared that the gods have no command over but are the servants of the Puruṣavid, he who realises the Puruṣa; then gathering up he burst into a paen of the loveliness of God's cosmic form, and prays: "Grant us our heart's desire. Grant us all the good that we see around. Grant us one and all." Can prayer go higher?

Sacrifice in the Puruṣasūktam

One of the most striking features about the *Puruṣasūktam* is the kalpana of the act of creation to a sacrifice. The world never knows and will never know a more holy and efficacious rite acceptable to God and man alike than a sacrifice. What a sublime idea is this, that God sacrificed Himself, and out of the supreme sacrifice of Himself, he has created the Universe! Nay, if we consider it aright, it is not a kalpana at all, or a figure of speech. but the plain unvarnished truth, that God has in some mysterious way transformed Himself into the world. The implication of this is

that everything in the world including ourselves is Divine and this divinity should be realised. This is the main teaching of the *Puruṣasūktam*.

The next point is, as can be expected, in the beginning and for a long time to come, a sacrifice was all rigid form and trapping. In the Rāmāyaṇa king Daśaratha is about to embark on his great Aśvamedha sacrifice. He cautions his guru Vaśiṣṭha and entreats: "Please see that all formalities and rituals are scrupulously observed for the Rākṣasas are ever enemies of anything that is holy, and are ever on the look out for any loophole or mistake that may occur, in order to destroy the sacrifice and him who does it." There has ever been in the world, and will be in one form or other this conflict between what may be termed as the Pūrva Mīmāmsins the Karmaṭhas, the pharisees who swear by the letter and the Uttara Mīmāmsins who swear by the spirit. In India this found a dramatic confrontation between the two great protagonists, Maṇḍanamiśra of Māhiṣmati and Śaṅkarabhagavatpāda and the latter won. But the Vedas themselves in which the major portion is devoted to karma and only the small Vedānta portion to the jñāna, which gives such meticulous directions as to the minute to be observed and the resulting differences in the phalas or the fruits of such observances, they themselves provided for the shift from the physical to the higher plane of the mind and the imagination, by adding at the end of almost every Karma-Ya evam veda - He who knows all these and performs this mentally, he attains the same result. This marks the transition from Abraham in the Old Testament to the vicarious sacrifice by Christ in the New Testament. The Gītā is a landmark in liberalising and spiritualising the Sampādika Yajñas, acts done on the mental and spiritual planes in a spirit of dedication.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम्।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥

Meaning: "The dedication is unto Brahman; the votive Havis is Brahman; the holy sacrificial fire is Brahman; the sacrificer is Brahman. With this mental attitude and concentration, the goal which is attained is also Brahman."

Rishi Nārāyaṇa was evidently fired by this Yajna kalpana in the *Purusasūktam*, for he capped his Nārāyaṇa Upanishad by

ending it with the kalpana of man's life to a sacrifice. Since the *Puruṣasūktam* involved no rite, it was one of the earliest to lay down the results of the mental upāsanā and lift it from the lower niche of Karma to higher one of the means for Jñāna, like the Rudram and the Camakam.

Creation in the Puruṣasūktam

What is the value to be attached to the portion relating to creation in the *Puruṣasūktam*. This question naturally arises not only in regard to this sūktam, but all the portions in the Vedas which embark on a description of creation. Are they consistent, are they scientific? One may recall the furore which arose on the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, and the conclusions of the ṣcientists on the age of the world and the first appearance of man on it. The Bible had given a ḍate and an order of creation in its Genesis, which were flatly contradicted by Science. The Vedas do not fall into any such error. On the other hand, they gave a highly natural and scientific order both as to Sṛṣṭi and Laya, evolution and involution. They have been elaborated in the Brahmasūtras and in the highly scientific Sāṅkhya system. Those who are interested may read the latter theory developed and set forth in a popular way in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa third Skandha Adhyāyas 5 & 6. But, all this is on the lower Vyāvahārika level, taking for granted the reality of the world. It must be stated at the outset that the *Puruṣasūktam* does not intend to treat about the order of creation in a logical or scientific manner. As Kṛṣṇa says in the Vibhūti Adhyāya of the Gītā (10-40) *एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तः* —'somethings that caught the eye at random are taken and mentioned by way of illustration merely.' Then, what is the real, the ultimate purpose of the Vedas in setting forth creation? The great Gauḍapāda answers it in his Māṇḍūkya Kārikā thus:

मृल्लोहविस्फुलिङ्गाद्यैः सृष्टिर्या चोदितान्यथा।
उपायः सोऽवताराय नास्ति भेदः कथंचन ॥ *(अद्वैतप्रकरणम् १५)*

Meaning: 'The seemingly different kinds of creation set forth by the examples of the Earth, the steel, and the fire-sparks etc. expounded in the Vedas (the Chāndogya Upanishad) are but means intended to lead the mind to grasp the underlying unity; no diversity exists in fact."

Śaṅkara's commentary on this śloka is: "Now, may be that before creation, nothing was born and there was only one Being without a second but after creation, all these that we see were born. Are not these Jīvas different? This śloka answers no; the significance of the śrutis setting forth creation is otherwise. The sruti seems to suggest different kinds of creation by citing examples of the clay, steel, and sparks of fire; but they are all merely intended to lead men's minds to grasp the essential oneness of the Jīva and the Paramātmā. Any other purpose of the Vedas than for this Buddhi Avatāra — 'for leading our minds', would be waste and futile. Hence the purpose of the srutis in treating of creation is solely for the aim of leading us to grasp this essential unity of man and God; no other interpretation is possible. Hence, no diversity has been created by creation." *Śaṅkara's Works*, Vani Vilas edition Vol 5 pp. 156, 157)

This is the traditional method of Āropa and Apavāda accepting the superimposition of the world for the sake of argument, in order to negate it finally by conclusive proof of the underlying eternal reality of the Brahman. Brahman or Puruṣa creates the Universe; He enters into all as the Jīva animating and sustaining them; His Upalabdhisthānam or place of realising him is eminently the Hṛdayam, the heart of man. It is a case of loosing and finding, of forgetting and recollecting, 'Brahmaiva san Brahma āpnoti'- the attainment of Brahman by one who has all along been Brahman. The Aitareya and the Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishads and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa explain this by the typical example of what happened to Brahmā, the creator. As soon as that first of being found himself in the universe, he put, the questions which arose in his mind and which every man as a rational being should frame to himself: (a) Who am I? (b) What is the source of my being? (c) What is the source of this universe? (d) What is my relation to such a source? (e) What is the relation of the universe to such a source? Brahmā went out outwardly in search of answers, as science does today, and returned baffled. Then, by a sudden inspiration he sank into contemplation and sought the answers within himself when at last he discovered the Puruṣa within and proclaimed it in the words of the Puruṣasūktam: "Him even do I know, the ineffable Puruṣa of the sheen of sun, who creating name and form appeareth as my veritable Jīva seeing and naming things." (Ṛk 16). Ṛk 2 categorically states that, "All

that is apprehended now is verily Puruṣa; similarly all that was and will be in future." The result is, that like the froth and foam appearing in the sea, the universe is a mere temporary phenomenon of Brahman, illusory and not having any independent existence or reality of its own, apart from that of Brahman. Once this veil of name and form is removed, the Reality shines by itself.

Works dealing with the Puruṣasūktam

Three works deal with the *Puruṣasūktam.* They are the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, and the Mudgala Upanishad. Numerous upāsanās have been inculcated in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Of these, the two easiest and Pratyakṣa are those of God in the sun which has been incorporated in the daily Sandhyā upāsanā, of the Hindus, and the second is that of the Virāṭ and the Virāṭ Puruṣa upāsanā incorporated in the *Puruṣasūktam.* This is also what was taught to King Parīkṣit by sage Suka in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in Skandha 2. Adhyāyas 1 & 2. The Mudgala Upanishad treats entirely of the *Puruṣasūktam.* It is the best commentary on it; it also gives practical instructions about the upāsanās. Hence, omitting some unnecessary portions, I have translated the Upanishad for the benefit of readers.

Translation of the Mudgala Upanishad

In the first Ṛk, the word "Saḥ"— "He," refers to Ananta, the Infinite God. The word "Dasāngula" — "ten inches," means infinite distance. The first Ṛk sets forth the spreading of God in space, the second in time, the third that He is the bestower of Mokṣa or immortality.

In the third Ṛk 'Etāvān—all this,' the powers and glory of Hari are declared; it also states the fourfold Vyūha aspect of God. The fourth Ṛk, Tripād 3/4 declares the glory of Aniruddha (the fourth Vyūha of God). By Ṛk 5 'Tasmāt Virāṭ'—'from Him Virāṭ, the creation of Prakṛti and Puruṣa—Virāṭ and Virāṭ Puruṣa, from the 1/4th portion of Hari is set forth. In Ṛk 'Yat puruṣeṇa, Sṛṣṭiyajña the grand sacrifice of creation is detailed. Ṛk 7 'Saptāsyāsan' mentions the Paridhis and Samiths in the rite. In Ṛk 8 Tam yajñam, the mode of the sacrifice is stated; it also points to Mokṣa. By Ṛk 9 'Tasmāt', jagatsṛṣṭi the creation of the world is mentioned. By the two mantras 'Vedāham' the Vaibhavam, the

powers and glory of Hari are told. The 'Yajñena yajñam' Rk concludes the portion relating to creation and states: "He who knows about it thus gets released."... Lord Vāsudeva taught Indra, knowledge about Bhagavān the God, and for a subtler appreciation explained the *Puruṣasūktam*. The Puruṣa or supreme being abandoned his condition of not being accessible by the knowledge of Nāma and Rūpa, name and form, and especially by samsārins: He wanted also to please the Gods who had passed through a period of tribulation; so He assumed a thousandfold form, highly auspicious which confers Mokṣa on a mere sight.

In that form He overspread the earth and the other worlds and stood transcending them by infinite Yojanas. The Puruṣa Narayaṇa became the past, present and future. He is also the bestower of Mokṣa unto all. He is greater than all his own Mahimas or powers and glories; there is none greater than Him. This Mahāpuruṣa made Himself into four. Three quarters remained in His supreme sky or self-glory. By his remaining one-quarter of Aniruddha Nārāyaṇa, He became the universe. The one-quarter Nārāyaṇa in order created Prakṛti for the creation of the universe. Though big and complete in form, Prakṛti did not know the work of creation. Hence Aniruddha Nārāyaṇa taught Prakṛti or Brahma how to create thus: "Oh! Brahma, contemplate that your senses are the Yājakas, the sacrificial priests. Contemplate that this strong body of yours built of the pañcakośas or the five sheaths, and the granthis or the heart-knots, (the wrong assumption that one is a Jīva and the identification with one's body) as the havis or the sacrificial offering. Contemplate me to be the Havirbhuk or the eater of the offering. Then, contemplate the spring season as the sacrificial ghee, the summer as the faggot, and the autumn as the rasa or the essence of the offering, and thus complete the sacrifice in Agni or the sacred fire." Then, all kinds of beings were created. From it sprang all animals like the cows, bulls, sheep etc. Then emerged the entire world comprising of the animate and the inanimate. You should understand that from this yoga of the Jīva and the Paramātman how to attain Mokṣa has also been stated. He who understands the Sṛṣṭiyajña, the sacrifice of creation and the method of Mokṣa, reaches full length of days.

The one Deva entering into many though unborn, gets born as the many. Him the Adhvaryus, the sacrificial priests worship as Agni, the divine fire. The Yajurvedins worship Him as the Yajus. The Chandogas worship Him as the Sāma. The snakes worship Him as poison; the snake-charmers worship Him as the snake. The Devas worship Him as Oorg the celestial life-giving principle. Men worship Him as Rayi or wealth. The Asuras worship Him as Māyā or illusion. The Pitṛs worship Him as Śraddhā or religious zeal and faith. Those acquainted with the Devajanas worship Him as the Devajanas or the collective gods. The Gandharvas worship Him as Rūpam or beauty. The Apsaras or water-nymphs worship Him as Gandharvas their lovers. And in whatever form and manner He is worshipped, God veritably becomes that. Therefore a Brahmin, one who seeks God, should contemplate: I am verily the Parabrahman, the supreme God in the Puruṣarūpa, in the form of the Puruṣa. And the votary becomes that verily. And he who understands the teaching of this Mudgala Upanishad verily becomes the Puruṣa (Sloka3).

Notes

The Mudgala Upanishad also sets forth how Brahman is entirely different from all the following qualities and limitations. The Tāpatrayas, the Saṭkośas, the Ṣaḍūrmis, the Pañcakośas, the Saḍbhāvavikāras.

1. The Tāpatrayas or three afflictions are (a) Ādhyātmika miseries brought about by oneself, Ādhibhautika miseries inflicted by the elements and Ādhidaivika inflicted by the gods. (b) Or it can be the triad of Kartṛ, Karma and Kārya—the doer, the act, and the effect. (c) Or it can be the triad of the Knower, Knowledge and the Known. (d) Or it can be the triad of the Bhoktā, the enjoyer, the enjoyment and the thing enjoyed.

2.The Ṣaṭkośas of the body are the skin, flesh, blood, bone, nerves, and marrow.

3.The Ṣaḍvarga or enemies of man are Kāma or desire, Krodha or anger, Lobha or greed, Moha or confusion, Mada or pride, Mātsarya or envy.

4.The Pañcakośas or five sheaths constituting a man are the Annamayakośa that constituted by food, Prāṇamaya that

constituted by vital airs, Manomaya that constituted by the mind, Vijñānamaya that constituted by the intellect, Ānandamaya that constituted by happiness.

5.The Saḍbhāvas of all things are endearment, birth, growth, change or evolution, decay, and extinction.

6.The Saḍūrmis or waves always overwhelming a man are—hunger, thirst, sorrow, confusion, old-age and death.

7.The Bhramas or mistaken notions are heredity, gotra or descent from some Ṛṣi or greater ancestor, Jāti or caste and Varṇāsrama or stage of life.

By contact with the above, the Paramapuruṣa becomes a Jīva, but He is not really different.

The Puruṣasūktam

Part I

Pūrvānuvāka

Ṛk 1

ओम् । सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात्।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वाऽत्यतिष्ठद्दशाङ्गुलम् ।।

पुरुषः — God the Virāṭ Puruṣa, who is the Abhimāna Devatā or identifies Himself with this cosmic universe *सहस्रशीर्षा* — Hath a thousand heads *सहस्राक्षः* — Hath a thousand eyes *सहस्रपात्* — Hath a thousand feet *सः* — That Puruṣa *भूमिं* — This circular universe *विश्वतो* — completely or on all sides *वृत्वा* — Covering or pervading *दशाङ्गुलं*— To the extent of 10 inches *अत्यतिष्ठत्* — Projected outside or exceeded.

Meaning: God in the form of the Virāṭ Puruṣa hath a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet. He overspread and pervaded this universe completely, and stood exceeding it by 10 inches.

Notes

1. In using any mantra the Ṛṣi or Seer who 'Saw' the mantra, the Chandas or Vedic metre in which it is couched, and the Devatā or deity intended to be propitiated, should be mentioned. For the Puruṣasūktam, Nārāyaṇa is the Ṛṣi; the Chandas for the Pūrva part is Anuṣṭup except for the 18th which is Triṣṭup, and Puruṣa is the Devatā. The Puruṣa is God who is the Cetana or intelligent being and stated to be subtler than, and different from the senses, mind, intellect, Mahat, and Avyaktam, and superior to whom none exists, and who is the Parā gatiḥ, the supreme refuge of all, as stated in the Kaṭha Upanishad 1–3–10 & 11.

2. It is stated at the outset that the entire universe is nothing but God in the form of Virāṭ. All material things have an Abhimānī, a person who loves that form, and the Abhimāna Devatā of the universe is Virāṭ. Virāṭ means 'he who shines well, he who can be apprehended completely by the senses, as this material universe.' The universe is nothing but the Samaṣṭi or agglomeration of the Vyaṣṭis or individuals comprising it. Thousand in this Ṛk is not a definite limiting number. It is an upalakṣaṇa signifying all the heads, eyes, feet, and all the bodies of all the beings in the universe.

3. If god is the universe, has He entirely transformed Himself wholesale, as milk gets curdled into curds? Is He to be equated with it, or does He retain anything? No; He stood over ten inches above it. Ten here again is an upalakṣaṇa for a major portion of God remaining in His own effulgence unaffected, and only an infinitesimal portion of His endless powers and glory getting manifested as the universe. The universe is only a negligible fraction of God, who transcends it infinitely. Three statements are made in this opening Ṛk (1) that God is the universe and all the beings in it; (2) that God overspread and entered the universe. This is the equivalent of the famous Praveśa Śruti in the Taittirīya Upanishad. Unless God interfused Himself into the universe, it will remain inert, dead. (3) It is not a complete and wholesale evolution of God as matter and beings, so that both can be equated. Stupendous and infinite as this universe strikes us, it is but an infinitesimal fraction of the limitless powers and glory of the most High. He stands apart from and transcends the universe unaffected by it in His own inherent glory.

Ṛk 2

पुरुष एवेदꣳसर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यम्।
उतामृतत्वस्येशानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति ॥

इदं सर्वं— All this material universe which is now apprehended by our senses *पुरुष एव*— Is only the manifestation of the Puruṣa *यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यं पुरुष एव*— Similarly the universes that appeared in the past and will appear in the future are only Puruṣa *उत अमृतत्वस्य ईशानः*— Further He is the Lord of

immortality. यत्— Though thus immortal as the Prime Cause अन्नेन in order to mete out strictly the fruits of the good and the bad that all beings do अतिरोहति — the Puruṣa has materialised Himself as this universe.

Meaning: God or the Puruṣa is the universe we apprehend now; similarly He was the universe in the past, and that which will be in the future. He is really immortal, but He has assumed the form of his transient perishable universe, as the result of the actions of beings, in order to make them taste the fruits of the good and the bad that they do.

Notes

1. Though the Puruṣasūktam started with the striking imagery of the Puruṣa having a thousand heads etc., it is here that the unqualified declaration is made emphatically that *Puruṣa eva idam sarvam*– Puruṣa is all this that we see,' placing it on a par with similar statements like the famous सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म — in the Chāndogya Upanishad, Īśāvāsya and others.

2. Puruṣa may be the present universe; were there universes in the past?; will they be in future?; if so, what is the relation of Puruṣa to them? Just as the beings now form a part of the Virāṭ Puruṣa, the same law and circumstances governed the past, and will govern the future. For, so long as beings perform acts, good and bad, they, almost as it were, compel the Puruṣa to descend from His real immortal nature, and to become the world, the theatre of enjoyment of the results of actions.

3. Yad annena atirohati – Sāyaṇa says: 'Yat – For the reason that. Annena – Due to the necessity of the Bhogya or enjoyment of all creatures, tasting the results of their acts. Atirohati– God casts off His role as the Prime Cause and assumes the form of the universe that we see. Since it is only for the sake of the disbursement of the rewards of good and bad that He assumes the form of the world, this is not His real nature.' A famous Sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa in the Brahmasūtras (2–8–38) states फलमत उपपत्तेः— the fruits of action are meted out by God only, since such alone is appropriate.

4. Uta amṛtatvasya īśānaḥ—God is the Lord of immortality; not only is He immortal, but he is capable of conferring

immortality on a person *य एवं वित्*— on a person who reads and understands this Puruṣasūktam as prescribed.

5. This Ṛk states (a) that God is the universe in all the three times – past, present and future (b) that He transcends Time and stands Immortal (c) that laying aside His divinity, He has become this world for the Bhogya of all beings. (d) But such a seeming derogation is not real derogation to His inherent glory.

Ṛk 3

एतावानस्य महिमाऽतो ज्यायाँश्च पूरुषः ।
पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥

एतावान्— All these material universes past, present, and future (as stated above) *अस्य महिमा*— Are only part manifestation of His exceeding powers and glory *पुरुषः*— The Lord *अतः ज्यायान्*— Is greater than His manifested universes *विश्वा भूतानि*— All beings past, present, and future *अस्य पादः*— Are 1/4 of Him *त्रिपात्*— 3/4 of Him *दिवि*— In His own inherent effulgence *अमृतम्*— Ever stands immortal.

Meaning: All these splendid universes past, present, and future, are a quarter of Him while 3/4 stands immortal in its own effulgence.

Notes

1. All the scriptures of the world proclaim the majesty of the universe. Science too has now reached that same awe-struck state. Nay, it is evident even unto the Gopas – the cowherds, and the Udahāryaḥ – the women who bring water in the early dawn, as the *Rudram* says. Dazzling and bewildering as the universe is, it does not represent God's real nature.

2. If so, what portion of God does the universe constitute? One fourth, this ṛk states, the remaining three fourths being God. The one and indivisible God has no form to be divided and is incapable of being cut and sundered, or measured. So, the one quarter and three quarters do not represent any real measurement in the ratio between God and the universe. It merely indicates that

a small, very negligible portion of God's infinite and indescribable powers has transformed itself as this changing, perishable world. Having no connection with it, and uninfluenced by it, God exists immortal and glorious in Himself. In the Chāndogya Upanishad, Sanatkumāra teaches Nārada the Bhūma Vidyā and states "That which is Bhūma, the greatest, the supreme is immortal; that which is small is mortal. Nārada asks 'In what then is Bhūma, the Supreme fixed or supported?' 'In its own Mahima– glory", replies Sanatkumāra (7–26).

3. God is satyam, jñānam anantam-existence, intelligence, and infinite, as the Taittirīya Upanishad declares. This is His Svarūpalakṣaṇa, His real and permanent definition. The same Upanishad also gives His Taṭasthalakṣaṇa- which is a temporary identification mark, as of a crow having sat on a house-top; it is the creation, preservation and destruction of the world. God does not ever perform these three acts; He can and does exist independent of these acts and of the world.

Ṛk 4

त्रिपादूर्ध्व उदैत्पुरुषः पादोऽस्येहा भवत्पुनः ।
ततो विष्वङ् व्यक्रामत्साशनानशने अभि ॥

त्रिपात् पुरुषः— The three quarter Puruṣa **उदैत्**— went up or stood above this universe of Samsāra **अस्य पादः**— the one quarter of Him **इह**— in this universe **पुनः**— again and again **अभवत्**— manifested itself **ततः**— thereafter, after such manifestation **विष्वङ्** — on all sides **व्यक्रामत्**— He went about **साशना अनशने अभि**— over or towards things that eat and do not eat.

Meaning: The three quarter Puruṣa rose and went – up above the universe and the Avidyā, Māyā, or ignorance which produced it and its resultant Saṁsāra. It is the one fourth that manifests itself again and again as the universe. Then, this quarter Puruṣa went about on all sides of the universe, taking the varied forms of the things that eat and that do not eat.

Notes

1. Ṛks 1 to 4 form one portion, setting forth the idea of the

conclusion of the Vibhūti Adhyaya (ch. 10 of the Gītā). Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa to name the particular objects wherein God's Vibhūtis or powers and glory are manifested in special measure. After mentioning a few outstanding examples, Kṛṣṇa says:

न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं सचराचरम्।। (१०-३९)
नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप।
एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया।। (१०-४०)
अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्।। (१०-४२)

Meaning: There is nothing animate or inanimate which can exist bereft of Me. Arjuna! there is no limit to My divine Vibhūtis. What I have indicated so far is merely at random. What will be the use to you even if you learn them fully? Manifesting and supporting this universe by a small portion of My powers, I stand apart.

2. How does the Puruṣa walk on all sides over or towards things animate and inanimate? By taking the forms of the gods, men, animals etc. Things which eat are beings endowed with Cetana or intelligence; those which do not eat are inanimate like mountains, rivers etc.

3. Udait--Three quarter Puruṣa stood over and apart untouched by Saṁsāra with all its tribulations of never-ending births and deaths and other miseries.

Ṛk 5

तस्माद्विराडजायत विराजो अधिपूरुषः।
स जातो अत्यरिच्यत पश्चाद्भूमिमथो पुरः ॥

तस्मात्— From Him (that one quarter Being who went on all sides and pervaded everything) *विराड्*— The material body of the universe *अजायत*— was born *विराजो अधि*— On that Virāṭ and with that body as its staff and support *पुरुषः अजायत*— The Puruṣa who loved and interfused the gross matter of the universe with spirit was born *स जातः*— The first being thus born, the Virāṭ Jīva Puruṣa *अत्यरिच्यत*— Grew and developed

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into the many, such as gods, men, animals etc., *पश्चात्*— After this state *भूमिं (ससर्ज)*— He created the earth *अथो पुरः (ससर्ज)*— Then he created the bodies for all beings.

Meaning: From that one-quarter Being who went everywhere was born Virāt, the material universe. With that Virāṭ body as its stay and support was born the Virāṭ Puruṣa. Thus infused and quickened, the first Virāṭ Puruṣa Jīva grew big and developed into the numberless Jīvas such as the gods, men, animals etc. Then the Virāṭ Puruṣa created the earth, and after that He created the body of all beings.

Notes

1. In the prior verse it is stated He Viṣvaṅ vyakrāmat– He went on all sides and pervaded all things and how, is explained in this Ṛk.

2. Virāṭ- means, 'numerous things shine in it.'

3. Puruṣa– It has been already stated that each gross body must have an Abhimani, a spirit that loves, quickens and identifies itself with it. This is the Virāṭ Puruṣa, who, according to the famous Taittirīya Praveśa Śruti —

सोऽकामयत । बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा । इद॰ सर्वमसृजत । यदिदं किञ्च । तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत् । *(Ānandavalli 6)*

Meaning: And God desired Let me be many, let me even create and produce'. And He went into contemplation as to how to create, and having contemplated, He created all this, whatever there is. And having created, God entered into them.

So, the Virāṭ Puruṣa is the first and foremost of Jīvas, and all Jīvas have sprung from Him. Who is He? Sāyaṇa, the great Vedic commentator states: 'He is the Paramātmā who is expounded in all the Vedāntas. It is He who having created the Virāṭ body by his Māyā, and entering it in the form of a Jīva, became the Abhimāna Devatā of the Brahmāṇḍa the cosmos, and a jīva. This is clearly stated in the Atharva-Uttara-tāpanî Upanishad: It is God who having created the elements, senses,

virāṭ, the gods, sheaths or bodies, and entering into them as Jīva,and though not Mūḍha or ignorant, behaves as ignorant by Māyā .

5. Puraḥ– are bodies fitted up or constituted by the seven Dhātus. They are blood, flesh, fat, sinews, bone, marrow, and semen (vide Garbha Upanishad 2).

6. This portion ends the first creation.

Ṛk 6

यत्पुरुषेण हविषा देवा यज्ञमतन्वत ।
वसन्तोऽस्यासीदाज्यं ग्रीष्म इध्मः शरद्धविः ॥

यत्— After the gods came into being with their bodies *देवाः*— the gods intent on further creation, since creation had not begun and the requisite articles prescribed for a sacrifice were non-existent *पुरुषेण हविषा*— conceived of the Puruṣa Himself as the votive food-offering, and with that *यज्ञं अतन्वत*— mentally performed the sacrifice of creation *अस्य*— of that sacrifice *वसन्तः*— the spring season *आज्यं आसीत्*— was the ghee *ग्रीष्म इध्मः आसीत्*— the summer was the dried fire-stick *शरद् हविः*— the autumn was the havis to be thrown into the fire.

Meaning: When thus the very first gods had come into being, they felt the urge to carry out and complete the act of creation begun by the Puruṣa. So, they performed a mental sacrifice with the Puruṣa Himself as the Havis—votive food-offering. In such mental sacrifice, the spring season was conceived as the clarified butter to be poured into the sacrificial fire; the summer was conceived as the dried faggot to be fed into the flames; the autumn was conceived as the Havis or the food to be offered.

Notes

1. The impulse for the first act of creation was that of God, the Primal Being who desired to create, Akāmayata. He created the Virāṭ and entered into it as the VirāṭPuruṣa. The further act of creation is carried out by the Gods, who are the senses of the Virāṭ Puruṣa. The gods implement the original fiat or will of God by carrying out the details.

2. Of all Vedic rites, the sacrifice was considered to be the most holy and potent. Naturally, all big undertakings were approximated or compared to this king of rituals. No wonder that the stupendous act of creation *मनसापि अचिन्त्यरचनारूपा*— Whose creation is inconceivable even by the mind (Sāṅkarabhāṣyam on Brahma Sūtra 2) is stated to be a mental sacrifice performed by the gods. Since all creation is yet to come and there are no sacrificial articles, the sacrifice is only mental, as also its accessories.

3. God is the Upādanakāraṇa – the stuff out of which the world is made. He is stated to be the Havis in this ṛk.

4. Note the poetic appropriateness of the seasons. Spring is the generating season, when the flames of desire burn fiercely; it stands for ghee. The hot summer which scorches everything is the dried fuel to keep the fire burning. The autumn 'Season of mellow fruitfulness', as Keats calls it, when the harvests ripen and are cut, is the Havis.

5. The gods first conceive of the Puruṣa generally as furnishing the Havis, the stuff of the warp and woof of creation. They then embark separately and specifically on its further details, as to how to shape and modify their material, the Puruṣa.

Rk 7

सप्तास्यासन्परिधयः त्रिः सप्त समिधः कृताः ।
देवा यद्यज्ञं तन्वाना अबध्नन्पुरुषं पशुम् ॥

अस्य— In this mental sacrifice *परिधयः*— the sacred Darbhas or holy grass protecting the sacrificial fire *सप्त आसन्*— were seven *समिधः*— The holy Samidh sticks put into the fire *त्रिः सप्त कृताः*— were constituted 21 *यज्ञं तन्वानाः देवाः*— the gods who performed the sacrifice *पुरुषं*— The Virāṭ Puruṣa *पशुं*— conceiving Him to be the beast to be sacrificed *अबध्नन्* tied him to the stake.

Meaning: In this sacrifice, the Paridhis were 7, and the Samidhs were constituted 21. The gods who performed the sacrifice tied the Virāṭ Puruṣa to the stake.

Notes

1. All the preliminaries necessary for a regular sacrifice were gone through. The Paridhis are usually Darbhas, holy grass or Samidhs or holy dried sticks from particular trees, placed two each on the three sides of the fire, north, west, and south, with the sun stated to be the seventh according to the Vedas, in the east. The object is to protect the fire from the obstruction by the Rākṣasas, the born enemies of all holy rites. Sāyaṇa says that they are the seven Vedic metres: the Gāyatrī, Uṣṇik, Anuṣṭup, Bṛhatī, Paṅkti, Triṣṭup, and Jagatī. One commentator has suggested that they are the seven seas. Some eastern and western scholars have let their imagination roam, but in all Vedic matters, the only safe and sure guide is the great Sāyaṇa of Vijayanagar but for whom Vedic lore would have died. Not only was he a deep scholar himself but he gathered a collegium of scholars, the result of whose joint labours are the outstanding Bhāṣyas on the four Vedas. The Pandits knew the Saṁpradāya meanings and had themselves been instructed in the traditional interpretations.

Sāyaṇa lists 21 Samidhs as 12 months, 5 seasons, 3 worlds, and the sun.

Ṛk 8

तं यज्ञं बर्हिषि प्रौक्षन् पुरुषं जातमग्रतः ।
तेन देवा अयजन्त साध्या ऋषयश्च ये ॥

अग्रतः जातं पुरुषं तं— That Virāṭ Puruṣa born before all beings and things *बर्हिषि प्रौक्षन्*— immolated in the sacrificial fire or placed him on the darbha and sprinkled with water *तेन*— With Him as the votive offering sacrificial beast and in this manner *ये देवाः साध्याः ऋषयश्च अयजन्त* — did the gods, sādhyas and ṛṣis conduct the sacrifice.

Meaning: This Virāṭ Puruṣa, thus born before creation and all beings and things, the gods, sādhyas and ṛṣis placed on the darbhas, sprinkled with the holy water and immolated Him in the sacrificial fire. In this manner even did they conduct the sacrifice.

Notes

1. Sāyaṇa reiterates in his commentary to almost every ṛk that this is purely a mānasa yajña, a mental sacrifice.

2. Sāyaṇa identifies the gods with the sādhyas. *सृष्टिसाधनयोग्याः प्रजापतिप्रभृतयः*— The Prājāpati and others capable of carrying on the work of creation. He states in another place that *देवाः प्रजापतिप्राणेन्द्रियरूपाः*— That the gods are the vital airs and the senses of Prajapati.

3. The ṛṣis are *मन्त्रद्रष्टारः*— who led pure and holy lives. In consequence high spiritual realization came to them intuitively and they 'saw' the Vedic mantras in a flash, as it were, which they gave expression to, as Triśaṅku in the Taittirīya and Vāmadeva in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishads.

4. Barhiṣi praukṣan — is capable of two meanings: (i) the Pasu – beast to be sacrificed or other offerings, is placed on the darbha or holy grass and preliminarily sprinkled with water to render it pure and acceptable to the gods. (ii) It also means the final act of immolation in the fire. Both the meanings can be taken and it makes little difference in the sense.

Ṛk 9

तस्मात् यज्ञात् सर्वहुतः संभृतं पृषदाज्यम् ।
पशूꣳ स्ताँश्चक्रे वायव्यान् आरण्यान् ग्राम्याश्च ये ॥

सर्वहुतः तस्मात् यज्ञात्— From that in which (Sarva – the all) Virāṭ Puruṣa who is the universal cosmic being was sacrificed *पृषदाज्यं*— curd, mixed with ghee *संभृतं*— was produced *वायव्यान् आरण्यान् ग्राम्याश्च पशून् चक्रे*— He created the aerial, forest, village or domestic animals.

Meaning: From that Sarvahut sacrifice was produced curds mixed with ghee. He produced also the aerial, forest and domestic animals.

Notes

1. Sacrifices are acknowledgedly the greatest of all human rituals because they entail dravyatyāga, the abandonment of one's wealth in favour of some god. In the majority, only a portion of one's wealth is parted with. But there are some sacrifices like the Viśvajit wherein one has to part with one's sarvasvam, all of one's

entire wealth. Two examples of it are on record: one by Vājaśravas, the father of the memorable Naciketas in the Kaṭha Upanishad and the second by Raghu in the Raghuvaṁśa. Definitely, sacrifices which involve the sacrifice of 'sarva' are the highest. The *Puruṣasūkta* points out the greatness of this first of sacrifices by designating it as Sarvahut that in which no less than the entire cosmic being was sacrificed.

2. Pṛṣadājyam- Curds and ghee alone are not meant here but they stand Upalakṣaṇa for the bhogajātam, all objects of sustenance and enjoyment in the world.

3. Three kinds of animals were created. (i) Vāyavyān – superior animals considered as fit for being sacrificed. Sāyaṇa quotes a Yajur Brāhmaṇa which explains the significance — 'Vāyu or god of air is the Adhyakṣa or supervisor of the Antarikṣa or intermediate region. The sacrificial beasts hence belong to the Antarikṣa devatā. (ii)The Āraṇya beasts are the deer etc. (iii) The grāmyas are the bulls, cows etc., the domestic animals.

Ṛk 10

तस्माद्यज्ञात्सर्वहुतः ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे ।
छन्दाꣳ सि जज्ञिरे तस्मात् यजुस्तस्मादजायत ॥

सर्वहुतः तस्मात् यज्ञात्— From that sacrifice wherein the Sarvahut Virāṭ Puruṣa was sacrificed *ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे*— were born the Ṛk and Sāma portion of the Veda *तस्मात् छन्दांसि जज्ञिरे*— From it were born the Vedic metres *तस्मात् यजुः अजायत*— From it arose the Yajur portion.

Meaning: From that same Sarvahut sacrifice were born the Ṛk, Sāma and Yajur portion of the Vedas and also the Vedic metres.

Notes

This does not refer to the Ṛk, Sāma and Yajur Vedas which were only later on grouped and compiled by Vyāsa. The Vedas were originally a heterogenous and confused mass. Rks were verses with fixed letters. Sāma were verses with fixed letters set to

music. Yajus were portions with no verses. This Rk herein refers to such portions in the original mass afterwards classified into the four Vedas. The Vedic metres are the seven as mentioned in the note under Ṛk seven.

Rk 11

तस्मादश्वाअजायन्त ये के चोभयादतः ।
गावो ह जज्ञिरे तस्मात् तस्माज्जाता अजावयः ।।

तस्मात् अश्वा अजायन्त— From that sacrifice were born the horses *ये के च उभयादतः (अजायन्त)*— From it sprang also other animals which have got the higher and lower sets of teeth. *तस्मात् गावो ह जज्ञिरे*— From it arose the cattle, bulls and cows. *तस्मात् अजावयः जाताः*— From it sprang, the sheep and goats.

Meaning: From that sacrifice sprang, the horses and also other animals having both sets of teeth and the cattle, bulls and cows and the sheep and goats.

Notes

1. With this Ṛk the creation of animals are over. Strictly speaking, this should come after Rk nine, but unlike some other śrutis which deal with the order of creation systematically, the Puruṣasūkta does not take it up with deliberate intent but, as Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna in the Gītā *एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तम्*— (10–40) more by way of illustration, mentioning the things that caught its eyes or came to its mind. Its intent is not cosmology but realization of the Puruṣa through Āropa and its Apavāda.

2. The animals other than horses having double sets of teeth are donkeys and mules.

Rk 12

यत्पुरुषं व्यदधुः कतिधा व्यकल्पयन् ।
मुखं किमस्य कौ बाहू कावूरू पादावुच्येते ।।

यत्पुरुषं व्यदधुः— when the gods and others mentally

sacrificed and cut the Virāṭ Puruṣa into many parts and divided Him *कतिधा व्यकल्पयन्*— Into how many parts did they divide and mould Him? *अस्य मुखं किं*— What did His face become? *कौ बाहू*— What became of His arms? *कावूरू पादावुच्येते*— What is stated regarding His thighs and feet?

Meaning: When the gods and others engaged in the sacrifice of creation cut the Puruṣa into how many parts did they sunder Him? What became of His face? What did His arms become? What is stated about His thighs and feet?

Notes

1. The first question is a general and comprehensive one and the remaining two, particular.

2. The questions and answers in the Vedas are usually by Brahmavādins, seekers of spiritual knowledge and the questions in this Ṛk take that traditional form, the replies being given in the succeeding Ṛks.

Ṛk 13

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीत् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः ।
ऊरू तदस्य यद् वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥

अस्य मुखं— The face of the Virāṭ Puruṣa *ब्राह्मणः आसीत्*— became the Brahmin *बाहू राजन्यः कृतः*— Both arms were formed into the Kṣatriya *अस्य यत् ऊरू तत् वैश्यः*— What formed His thighs were made into the Vaiśya. *पद्भ्यां*— From His feet *शूद्रो अजायत*— was born the Śūdra.

Meaning: The face of the Virāṭ Puruṣa became the Brahmin, His arms the Kṣatriya, His two thighs became the Vaiśya, from His feet sprang the Śūdras.

Notes

1. This and the succeeding verses are the replies of Brahmavādins to the above questions posed in Ṛk 12.

2. The answers start with the creation of man over the entire universe. Hence they who want to deduce the institution of the

caste system in India from this Ṛk like Professor Macdonell are entirely on the wrong track. India is but a small part of the universe, and the caste system in it came many centuries later. The Ṛk broadly refers to the four kinds of activities of man which are valid at all times in all worlds.

(a) The Brāhmaṇa: He who is intent on Brahman or God is the spiritual and intellectual type.

(b) The Kṣatriya–the active type who is fit for governance and military.

(c) The Vaiśya with a bent for agriculture and commerce.

(d) The Śūdra performs miscellaneous menial services. No order of preference is intended in the Ṛk. All the four orders are stated to have sprung alike from the limbs of God. I am fortified in this opinion by the views enunciated in the *Oxford History of India.*

Ṛk 14

चन्द्रमा मनसो जातः चक्षोः सूर्यो अजायत ।
मुखादिन्द्रश्चाग्निश्च प्राणाद्वायुरजायत ॥

मनसः — From the mind of the Virāṭ Puruṣa *चन्द्रमाः जातः* — was born the moon *चक्षोः* — From His eye; *सूर्यो अजायत*— was born the sun; *मुखात् इन्द्रश्च अग्निश्च*— From His mouth were born Indra and Agni *प्राणात्*— From His life-breath *वायुः अजायत*— was born the wind.

Meaning: From the mind of the Virāṭ Puruṣa was born the moon; from His eyes the sun; from his mouth Indra and Agni; from His life-breath the wind.

Notes

1. I have already mentioned that no order of creation is intended. Hence just as in 'curds with ghee', objects of enjoyment, the animals and men were parts of the creation, the gods like the sun and moon, Indra and Agni also sprang from Him.

2. The sun is the Adhiṣṭhāna Devatā of the eye, the moon of the mind, Agni of speech and Vāyu of breath. Indra is mentioned as the chief of the gods.

Ṛk 15

नाभ्या आसीदन्तरिक्षं शीर्ष्णो द्यौः समवर्तत ।
पद्भ्यां भूमिर्दिशः श्रोत्रात् तथा लोकाꣳ अकल्पयन् ॥

नाभ्याः— From His navel *अन्तरिक्षं आसीत्*— arose intervening space between the earth and heaven *शीर्ष्णोः*— -from His head *द्यौः समवर्तत*— the heaven came into existence *पद्भ्यां भूमिः*— from His feet this earth *श्रोत्रात् दिशः*— from His ears the quarters *तथा लोकान् अकल्पयन्*— In similar manner did the gods and ṛsis create all the worlds.

Meaning: From the navel of the Virāṭ Puruṣa sprang the antarikṣam space between the heaven and the earth. From His head the heaven; from His feet earth. The gods and ṛsis created the other worlds in this manner.

Notes

1. With this Ṛk the creation portion ends.

2. What is stated with regard to creation so far is universally applied with regard to the creation of all worlds.

3. 'Tathā lokān akalpayan' — bears also the meaning that just as out of His mind etc., the moon and others were fashioned, similarly from His navel, head and feet, the antarikṣham etc., were formed.

Ṛk 16

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवर्णं तमसस्तु पारे ।
सर्वाणि रूपाणि विचित्य धीरः नामानि कृत्वाऽभिवदन् यदास्ते ॥

यत् That *धीरः* great Puruṣa who, *सर्वाणि रूपाणि विचित्य* after having moulded all the forms in the universe *नामानि कृत्वा*

— and designating each by its peculiar name *अभिवदन् आस्ते*— exists as the Jīva calling things by their names and carrying on worldly affairs *एतं पुरुषं महान्तं*— This Virāṭ Puruṣa having supreme excellent qualities *तमसस्तु पारे*— who stands on the other shore of darkness or spiritual ignorance *आदित्य वर्णम्*— effulgent like the sun *अहं वेद*— I know intimately by realization.

Meaning: I know by intimate realization, this great and excellent Virāṭ Puruṣa, who after having created all the forms in the universe hath designated them by their names and moveth about as the Jīva carrying on the worldly affairs with the help of names and speech. He hath the sheen of the sun. He standeth beyond the darkness of ignorance and saṁsāra.

Notes

1. Sāyaṇa states: "This Ṛk enjoins the dhyāna or contemplation of the Virāṭ Puruṣa as set forth above. The ṛṣi, the seer of the Puruṣasūktə proclaims the result of his dhyāna in the Ṛk. Hence, ignorant persons devoid of the instruction from a guru and śāstra cannot expect this realization."

2. This Ṛk is the climax to which the prior ones lead unto. Ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa who has studied the Veda and had been properly initiated into the upāsanā of the Virāṭ Puruṣa by a proper guru gives expression to his spiritual realization in this striking manner. Swami Vivekānanda quoted this Rk and explained its meaning in America and electrified his audiences.

3. What is the sum and substance of Ṛsi Nārāvana s experience?

(a) The universe is nothing but name and form stemming from the original creative impulse of god.

(b) That sage Nārāyaṇa himself is but one link in the chain of creation.

(c) When his mind got purified and clarified by a proper study of the Vedas and the upāsanā taught by a real guru, by the strength of such an upāsanā he became a ṛṣi, the Vedic seer on whose mind the *Puruṣasūkta* flashed, who thus saw the mantra and realized the Virāṭ Puruṣa in all His glory within himself as his own self.

Ṛk 17

धाता पुरस्ताद् यमुदाजहार शक्रः प्रविद्वान् प्रदिशश्चतस्रः ।
तमेवं विद्वानमृत इह भवति नान्यः पन्था अयनाय विद्यते ॥

धाता— The earliest and foremost of the Prajāpatis, Brahmā, the creator *यम्*— whom the Virāṭ Puruṣa *उदाजहार*— expounded as a matter of personal experience (to Indra) *चतस्रः प्रदिशः प्रविद्वान् शक्रः*— Indra who knows intimately all beings in all the four quarters *यं उदाजहार*— proclaimed the Virāṭ Puruṣa out of grace to them all *तं एवं विद्वान्*— He who knows the Virāṭ Puruṣa in the manner thus handed over *इह*— In this world or in this life *अमृतः भवति*— becomes immortal *अयनाय*— for this goal of immortality *अन्यः पन्था*— another path or means *न विद्यते*— existeth not.

Meaning: Prajāpati, the Creator (who was the first to realize the Virāṭ Puruṣa inside him as a result of his search and contemplation) expounded it (to Indra, the king of gods and men). Indra (who as the king of the world) knew all beings in the four quarters, in his turn expounded this vidyā or upāsanā to the world. And that person who realizes the Virāṭ Puruṣa in the above traditional manner, becomes immortal in this world and even during his life time. Other path than this existeth not for the goal (of immortality).

Notes

1. The guru-siṣya paramparā of this vidyā or upāsanā is set forth herein. Prajāpati or Brahmā was fittingly the first to have this anubhava. He taught it to Indra who being king of the earth and men took compassion on them and broadcast it. Anywhere and at any time if any person learns this vidyā and practises it he can be sure of a similar realization and become immortal.

2. Nānyaḥ panthā ayanāya vidyate. Sāyaṇa says, "By performance of thousands of karmas one cannot become immortal. For the sāstra declares. "One cannot obtain immortality by karma or holy rites, or begetting sons or wealth." The Śvetāsvatara Upanishad (6-20) declares: "On the day when men fold the sky.and wear it like a skin covering, can men hope to see the end of human ills and miseries without knowing the glorious God within them."

Ṛk 18

यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवाः तानि धर्माणि प्रथमानि आसन्।
ते ह नाकं महिमानः सचन्ते यत्र पूर्वे साध्याः सन्ति देवाः ॥

देवाः— The gods who were the Prāṇas of Prajāpati *यज्ञेन*— in the mental sacrifice *यज्ञं*— Lord Prajāpati who was the Yajña, the form of the sacrifice itself *अयजन्त*— conducted the sacrifice i.e., worshipped Him by this contemplation *तानि धर्माणि प्रथमानि आसन्*— from such a worship arose those primal dharmas which sustain the world *यत्र नाकं*— in which Virāṭ heaven *पूर्वे साध्याः*— the ancient sādhya gods who performed the Virāṭ upāsanā dwell *ते महिमानः*— later great upāsakas *सचन्ते*— attain unto.

Meaning: Even in this way did the primal gods conduct the sacrifice with the Virāṭ Puruṣa as the votive offering. From that sprang, the foremost and important dharmas. And all the later high-souled upāsakas attain unto the same heaven where dwell those ancient sādhya gods who first conducted this sacrifice.

Notes

1. This ṛk summarizes the Pūrva Puruṣasūkta, the first line concluding the sacrificial portion and the second, the upāsanā and its phala or the result.

2. The performance of the mental sacrifice is worship of God as Virāṭ Puruṣa by contemplation, which the ancient and very first sādhya devas formulate and systematize. As a result of such upāsanā, these devas became immortal and dwell in bliss for ever in the Virāṭ deśa or heaven. Is it a separate heaven like the Indraloka, Candraloka and Pitṛloka? No. It is Virāṭ prāptirūpa, attaining unto and becoming one with the Virāṭ Puruṣa. These gods stand there ever ready to help all later upāsakas who can attain unto the same blissful state. God-realisation ensues by contemplation.

3. Tāni dharmāṇi prathamāni āsan — Along with creation sprung those Dharmas i.e. those famous scientific laws which uphold the universe and through which "the ancient heavens are strong", as Wordsworth states. They are also the moral and spiritual laws writ inside the hearts of all men.

The Puruṣasūktam

Part II

Uttarānuvāka

Ṛk 1

अद्भ्यः संभूतः पृथिव्यै रसाच्च विश्वकर्मणः समवर्ततााधि ।
तस्य त्वष्टा विदधद्रूपमेति तत्पुरुषस्य विश्वमाजानमग्रे ।।

अद्भ्यः— This Virāṭ form or material manifestation of Universe sprung from the waters spread everywhere at the time of creation *पृथिव्यै रसाच्च*— and from the hard core of the waters which hardened into the Earth *विश्वकर्मणः*— from the God, the creator *अधि समवर्तत*— arose that presiding deity of the universe, the Cetana Being who infuses the cosmic universe with His intelligence known as the Virāṭ Puruṣa and Īśvara *तस्य रूपं विदधत्*— assuming the form of all these 14 sets of worlds in the universe *त्वष्टा*— the Lord, God, the creator *एति*— occupies or engages Himself *पुरुषस्य*— of the Virāṭ *तद्विश्वं*— all this visible and well-known universe in the forms of gods, men etc. *अग्रे*— at the time of creation *आजानं*— was born and developed everywhere.

Meaning: The cosmic matter called the Virāt sprung from the waters and their hard earthy core, spread everywhere at the time of creation. From God, arose that Cetana or intelligent Being who infused the Cosmic Universe with His intelligence known as the Virāt Purusa. The Virāt Purusa then embarked on moulding and giving distinct form to the universe and all things in it. This is how creation began, and extended everywhere.

Notes

1. This ṛk summarizes the process of creation, the emergence of the material universe from the primal waters, and their hard

earthy core, God entering into and infusing life and vitality into inert matter by entering it as the Virāṭ Puruṣa, the further individuation of all things with their peculiar distinctions resulting in the clear-cut moulding of the Cosmic Virāṭ.

2. Some commentators explain that the waters mentioned here are not the elemental ones, but signify the inchoate nebulous pre-creative state.

3. Tvaṣṭā is that aspect of the creator which defines all things, giving shape and form to them.

4. Compare with this the opening of the Aitareya Upanishad (1–3): "The self alone existed before. Nothing else existed or functioned then. He thought, "I shall create the worlds and the lokapālas, the guardian deities. He formed a Puruṣa from the waters and infused life into him." (1-3). Śaṅkara's commentary on this is: "Thus thinking, out of the waters, out of the five elements in which water is predominant, he moulded a Puruṣa, a form like that of a man with limbs like the head, hands etc., from the waters, just as the potter moulds a form from clay and infused it with His life." (Vani Vilas edition Vol.5. p.253).

Ṛk 2

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम् आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्।
तमेवं विद्वानमृत इह भवति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय।।

This ṛk with some modifications is the same as the lines in ṛks 16 & 17 which have been explained above.

Ṛk 3

प्रजापतिश्चरति गर्भेऽन्तः अजायमानो बहुधा विजायते।
तस्य धीराः परिजानन्ति योनिं मरीचीनां पदमिच्छन्ति वेधसः ।।

गर्भे— In the midst of this huge projection of the cosmic universe *प्रजापतिः चरति*— the formless One moves about assuming all forms *अजायमानो*— though birthless *बहुधा विजायते*—

he is born as many *तस्य योनिं*— how and in what manner God is the source of all things and His real unaffected nature *धीराः*— the wise Ones by force of self-control and Yogic practices *परिजानन्ति*— understanding, contemplating and worshipping *वेधसः मरीचीनां पदं*— the exalted position of the great and glorious Prajāpatis like Marīci *इच्छन्ति*— desire to attain unto.

Meaning: In the midst of this huge conception and projection of the cosmic universe, the formless One moves about in the shape of all. Though birthless He is born as all. The wise high-souled persons understand how God is the source. Desiring the exalted position of Marīci and the original Prajāpatis, they attain it and become creators themselves.

Notes

1. Just as a foetus moves in the womb, God moves about in the Universe as the Antaryāmi, the Inner Ruler Immortal.

2. The unborn One is born as many again and again. The wise alone are able to resolve this paradox by upāsanā and contemplation. The great Gauḍapāda has incorporated in His Māṇḍūkyakārikā:

नेह नानेति चाम्नायात् इन्द्रो मायाभिरित्यपि ।
अजायमानो बहुधा जायते मायया तु सः ॥ *(अद्वैतप्रकरणं-24)*

Meaning: "The Śrutis declare that there is no plurality in the universe and that Indra through His Māyā assumed numerous forms. Hence though unborn, He assumes numerous forms by His Māyā." Saṅkara's commentary on this is as follows:- "Ācārya Gauḍapāda states that the settled conclusion of the Śruti on the subject of Creation is this. The Śruti states "Though unborn He is born as the many." Hence He is born through Māyā. The word तु: means by Māyā alone. Now, birth and death cannot co-exist in a single object or person; as cold and heat cannot co-exist in fire. Hence since a sight of Unity alone benefits man and not diversity, that alone is the objective of the Śruti. The Īśāvāsya says, "He who sees unity everywhere, where is confusion or sorrow for him?" The Kaṭhavallī also condemns that he who sees diversity in creation etc., goes from one death to another." *(Śaṅkara's Works,* Vanivilas, ed. Vol.5 p.163).

3. Tasya yonim – Sāyaṇa explains God's real nature as satyam, jñānam, anantam and how He becomes the source through the agency of Māyā. The Śvetāśvataropanishad states, *ते ध्यानयोगानुगताः अपश्यन्देवात्म शक्तिं स्वगुणैर्निगूढाम्*— "The sages who started to investigate the source of the universe by force of contemplation saw the divine power or energy of God which had shrouded itself by its own qualities." (1-3)

4. The upāsakas either desire the positions of Marīci and other Prajāpatis, or desiring it attain and become Vedhasaḥ, creators themselves.

Ṛk 4

यो देवेभ्यो आतपति यो देवानां पुरोहितः ।
पूर्वो यो देवेभ्यो जातः नमो रुचाय ब्राह्मये ।।

यो देवेभ्यो आतपति— that Lord God who entering into the gods and conferring His powers illumines them *यो देवानां पुरोहितः*— who is ever solicitous about the welfare of the gods, or was born as Bṛhaspati the preceptor of the gods *यो देवेभ्यो पूर्वो जातः*— who was born before the gods as Hiraṇyagarbha *नमो ब्राह्मये रुचाय*— salutations unto that self-shining Parabrahman or Him who is expounded only by the Vedas.

Meaning: Salutations unto that self-effulgent Parabrahman (or the effulgence which is expounded only in the Vedas); He who entering the hearts of the gods makes them effulgent and immortal; who is the Purohita of the gods ever solicitous of their welfare; who was born before the gods of Hiraṇyagarbha.

Notes

1. This ṛk declares that the glory of the Devas is derived from the Supreme Brahman. He illumines each God according to His measure; makes them Adhikāra Puruṣa and confers immense powers on them; makes them honoured; and charges them with the physical and moral governances of the world.

2. God is always solicitous about the welfare of His Vibhūtis. In the Kenopanishad occurs the following story. In days of yore,

there was a great fight between the gods and asuras. Brahman willed that the gods should win and so they won, but due to egotism they exalted themselves, and became proud of their victory. Brahman thought this unbecoming in beings who should have Daivasampat of meekness and humility, and not the Asurasampat of pride. He appeared before them as a Yakṣa whom they were not able to make out. Indra went in humility and Umā appeared and taught him Brahmavidyā and the other gods learnt it from Indra. Not only was God solicitous of their spiritual welfare, but He took numerous Avatārs and protected them from the Asuras and Rākṣasas. Sāyaṇa says that God was born as Bṛhaspati, the Devaguru and he quotes a śruti as authority.

3. A śruti says *हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तत अग्रे*— Hiraṇyagarbha, Brahma was born before all things.

Ṛk 5

रुचं ब्राह्मं जनयन्तः देवा अग्रे तदब्रुवन्।
यस्त्वैवं ब्राह्मणो विद्यात् तस्य देवाः असन् वशे ॥

ब्राह्मं रुचं—The infinite spiritual glory of Brahman *जनयन्तः*— diffusing or propagating to the world *देवाः*— the gods *तदग्रे अब्रुवन्*— proclaimed the following at the time of creation, or standing before God made this prayer *यः ब्राह्मणः*— that or whichever Brahmin *त्वा एवं विद्यात्*— knows or realises Thee in this manner inculcated by the Puruṣasūkta *तस्य वशे*— in or under his control *देवाः असन्*— let the gods stand.

Meaning: And standing before God at the time of creation, the gods intent on establishing the great Brahmavidyā Sampradāya, and propagating the infinite spiritual glory of the Lord made this prayer unto Him. "If any spiritual seeker of Thee, the Brahmin should come to know Thee in the manner inculcated above, let us the gods stand ever in his control."

Notes

1. Brāhmam rucam janayantaḥ—literally means producing the glory of God. Since God's glory is already eternally existent, Sāyaṇa says: "Exhibiting or propagating to the world by the

adumbration of the Brahmavidyā Sampradāya, the inauguration of the traditional teaching and initiation of the supremest of all Vidyās, the Brahmavidyā".

2. Tad agre abruvan—has two meanings: (i) at the time of creation when the gods finalised the performance of the Puruṣa sacrifice; (ii) by force of their vidyā and their realization, the caitanyam or spiritual glory that is Brahman verily stood before the gods and they addressed it in the manner set forth in this ṛk.

3. Brāhmaṇa—in the Upanishads, the Gītā and in this Puruṣasūktam does not refer to one by birth but according to its root meaning to one intent on Brahman who realizes it, as defined by Yājñavalkya to Gārgi in the Bṛhdāraṇyaka. 3-8-11. *य एतदक्षरं गार्गि विदित्वा अस्मात् लोकात् प्रैति स ब्राह्मणः।*

Meaning: Oh Gargi! he who knows this akṣara or changeless Eternal Being and departs from this world with that knowledge, he alone verily is a Brahmin.

4. Tasya devā āsan vaśe—a śruti states that the ignorant men were mere paśus or beasts of burden who toil eternally for the gods, who are ever jealous and do not want men to get enlightened and free themselves from their bondage (Bṛhad 1-4-10). On the contrary, the śruti also sets forth how the gods lose control over the Brahmavit and how they pass into his control: "All that sage Vāmadeva declared when he attained realization: "If one should attain unto even now at any time, 'I am verily Brahman', he becomes all this universe. The gods are not able to command and lord it over him, since he becomes their self." Sāyaṇa adds: "He becomes the Antaryāmi, the Inner Ruler Immortal, the paramātman of the gods. The gods are no longer his masters but they pass under his control."

Rk 6

ह्रीश्च ते लक्ष्मीश्च पत्न्यौ अहोरात्रे पार्श्वे ।
नक्षत्राणि रूपम्। अश्विनौ व्यात्तम्।
इष्टं मनिषाण । अमुं मनिषाण । सर्वं मनिषाण ॥

ह्रीश्च— Hrī, the goddess of Shame and Modesty *लक्ष्मीश्च*—

and Lakṣmi, the goddess of wealth and power *ते पत्न्यौ*— are thy two wives, Oh Virāṭ Puruṣa! *ते पार्श्वे*— thy two flanks or sides *अहोरात्रे*— are days and nights *नक्षत्राणि*— the stars *ते रूपं*— are thy form *ते व्यात्तं*— thy open mouth *अश्विनौ*— are the twin Asvins *इष्टं मनिषाण*— grant us the desire of our hearts *अमुं मनिषाण*— grant us all this wealth of cattle, comfort and convenience that we see *सर्वं मनिषाण*— grant us one and all.

Meaning: **Lord God! Hrī and Śrī, the goddesses of shame and fortune are thy two wives. Day and night are thy flanks. The two lovely Aśvini stars are thy glittering open mouth. This then is our prayer to Thee: "Grant us the desires of our hearts. Grant us the wealth that we see. Grant us the all, the highest good."**

Notes

1. This short and splendid concluding prayer can be taken to be that of three persons. (a) As the concluding portion of the prayer by the Gods in the preceding fifth ṛk;(b) as the natural close of the Puruṣasūkta composed by Nārāyaṇa ṛṣi;(c) as the prayer which we the readers and the reciters of the Puruṣasūkta should voice.

2. Hrī and Lakṣmī are fittingly the wives of God. Hrī—shame is a rather confusing word in all languages. Thiruvalluvar is at pains to define this innate feeling based on virtue which recoils with revulsion from doing anything opposed to Dharma. The lajjā or shame of chaste women, the sense of modesty is one manifestation of it. Hrī is that exquisite and highly developed moral feeling, that conscience which makes a man to loath and shrink from thinking, speaking, or doing anything which would debase and injure his spiritual self and self-respect. We meet with the word often in the Vedas and other religious books. Valluvar has devoted canto 102 of his Kural to it. It is the moral aspect of God. Lakṣmī is the Vibhūti or Mahimā, the manifestation of the limitless powers and glory of God.

3. The sublime majesty and loveliness of the cosmic Virāṭ Puruṣa to whom this prayer is addressed is tersely set forth, (a) moral order and wealth and glory are His inseparable wives; (b) day and night are His time aspects; (c) the infinite and lovely stars

are His form, (d) the twin Aśvins, the most handsome of the gods heralding the dawn are His open mouth.

4. Iṣṭam, amum and sarvam are prayed for. They are capable of many interpretations. But all are unanimous in asking for the best of both the worlds. Sāyaṇa interprets Iṣṭam as that most longed for Ātmabodham, self-realisation; Amum, the wealth of cattle, house, lands which one sees spread before him in this world. Sarvam - why go on detaining? All worldly or heavenly things which can be desired. Taking pity on us, poor mortals whose vision is after all limited, the Vedas have listed all the things that can and should be desired in the Camakam. Interpreted in any way, this prayer amounts to asking for the gifts of heaven and earth and the ultimate one niśśreyas, the summum bonum, the ultimate good of Mokṣa or salvation which is be-all and end-all of all desires, and which comprises and transcends them.

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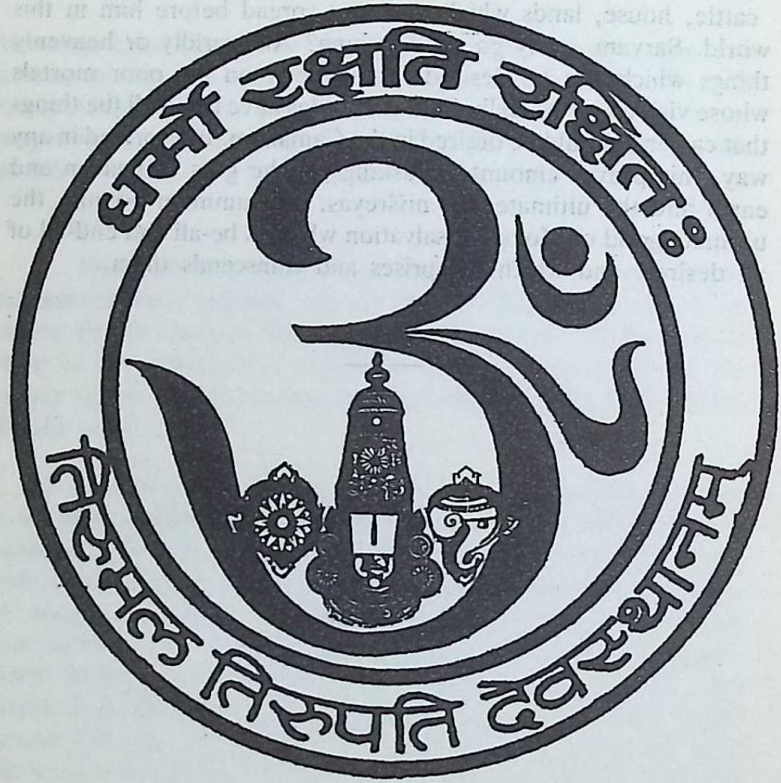

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